

Brainerd Dispatch
Matt Erickson
February 17, 2011

MINNEAPOLIS — Eric Makowski-Budrow, a former Brainerd paid on-call firefighter, was sentenced to 30 months in prison Thursday for his role in embezzling more than \$600,000 from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Makowski-Budrow, 31, Brainerd, was sentenced in federal court in Minneapolis by U.S. District Court Judge David S. Doty on one count of embezzlement from a tribal organization. Makowski was charged Nov. 24, 2009, and pleaded guilty on Dec. 7, 2009.

Makowski-Budrow was as a paid on-call firefighter for Brainerd from Aug. 1, 2006, until Oct. 4, when he was unanimously fired by the Brainerd City Council for his role in the tribal embezzlement. Makowski-Budrow also previously served on the Brainerd Planning Commission and Housing and Redevelopment Authority but resigned from those positions after the city started investigating his federal crime.

In his plea agreement, Makowski admitted that between 2005 and June 13, 2007, he, in his capacity as a construction project manager for Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, coordinated fraudulent and excessive payments to contractors. He then arranged kickbacks from a vendor to enrich himself.

In order to further the scheme, Makowski admitted he rigged bids and created false documents. He also misused a commercial account funded by the band at Home Depot stores in order to purchase things he was not authorized or entitled to receive. He then used those items to improve the property of others.

[Click to read the full article.](#) [®]